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Claim 9 (cancelled). The system of claim 1, wherein the one or more disambiguation components disambiguates the alternatives in plural iterative stages, whereby the first stage narrows the alternatives to a number of alternatives that is smaller than that initially generated by the selection component, but greater than one, and whereby the one or more disambiguation components operative iteratively to narrow the alternatives in subsequent iterative stages.

Claim 10 (cancelled). The system of claim 9, whereby the number of iterative stages is limited to a specified number.

Claim 11 (currently amended). A method of processing speech input using one of voice mode interaction, visual mode interaction, or a combination of voice mode and visual mode interaction with an application comprising:

a speech disambiguation mechanism;

receiving user parameters and application parameters for controlling the speech disambiguation mechanism, wherein both the user and the application can set the parameters to control said mechanism, and wherein the parameters include confidence thresholds governing unambiguous recognition and close matches;

receiving a speech input from [[a]] the user;

determining whether the speech input is ambiguous;

if the speech input is not ambiguous, communicating a token representative of the speech input to an application as input to the application; and

if the speech input is ambiguous;